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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
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09/382,457 08/25/99 HARRIS

M P06477USO/DE

EXAMINER

000881 MM91/0823
LARSON & TAYLOR, PLC
1199 NORTH FAIRFAX STREET
SUITE 900
ALEXANDRIA VA 22314

ROBINSON, M	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER

2872
DATE MAILED:

08/23/01

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/382,457

Applicant(s)

HARRIS, MARTIN RUSSELL

Examiner

Mark A. Robinson

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 6/18/01.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-46 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 3-8, 13-17, 19-23, 27-43, 45 and 46 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 2, 9-12, 18, 24-26 and 44 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election without traverse of group I and species a. in Paper No. 5 is acknowledged.

It should be noted that claims 1,24 and 44 are linking claims. The restriction requirement among the linked inventions is subject to the nonallowance of the linking claim(s). Upon the allowance of the linking claim(s), the restriction requirement as to the linked inventions shall be withdrawn and any claim(s) depending from or otherwise including all the limitations of the allowable linking claim(s) will be entitled to examination in the instant application. Applicant(s) are advised that if any such claim(s) depending from or including all the limitations of the allowable linking claim(s) is/are presented in a continuation or divisional application, the claims of the continuation or divisional application may be subject to provisional statutory and/or nonstatutory double patenting rejections over the claims of the instant application. Where a restriction requirement is withdrawn, the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 121 are no longer applicable. See *In re Ziegler*, 44 F.2d 1211, 1215, 170 USPQ 129, 131-32 (CCPA 1971). See also MPEP § 804.01.

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Claims 1,2,9-12,18,24-26 and 44 read on the elected group and species and will be examined on the merits as follows.

Claims 3-8,13-17,19-23,27-43,45 and 46 are withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to non-elected subject matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. Claims 1,2,9-12 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

✓ In the last line of claim 1, lack of an object makes it unclear what is "near said light source".

✓ In claims 11 and 12 the recitation of "prisms and/or lenses" makes it unclear if prisms, lenses, or both are included in the beam splitter. Accordingly, composition of the beam splitter is indefinite.

✓ Further in claim 12, "minimal" as used in line 3 is a relative term, the metes and bounds of which are unable to be ascertained.

✓ Additionally in claim 12, "coherent light or light reflected from said sample" is indefinite because this refers to two distinct beams along different portions of the optical path. In the last lines of the claim, it is said that this beam,

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whichever it may be, is parallel and coaxial "with its path immediately before impinging" the beam splitter. As multiple beams are in question which impinge upon the beam splitter multiple times, the relationship between the claimed beams is unintelligible.

The remaining claims inherit the deficiencies of the base claim.

Inasmuch as the claims are able to be understood in light of the 112 rejections made above, the following rejection(s) apply:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1,2,9-12,18 and 24-26 are rejected under 35

U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kuhn et al.

Kuhn shows in fig. 4 a confocal microscope including a coherent laser light source(102) including an optical

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fiber(110), a beam splitter(152) including prisms, and light receiving means(116) near the source, wherein light returning from the sample is deviated or displaced by the beam splitter relative to the incident beam.

With respect to claim 2, the support for the light source may be considered as an optical head.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claim 44 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuhn et al.

Kuhn does not specifically teach the returning light to be broader than the incident light. However, use of known illumination which would enable a broader return beam (either spatially or spectrally) would have been obvious to the ordinarily skilled artisan at the time of invention depending upon the type of imaging to be performed upon the specimen.

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Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Penkethman and Harris et al show imaging systems including adjacent illumination and return beams.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mark Robinson whose telephone number is (703) 305-3506.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Cassandra Spyrou can be reached at (703) 308-1687. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 308-7722.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.



Mark Robinson

Patent Examiner

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8/16/01